

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7684
INFO AMEMBASSY ATHENS
AMEMBASSY NICOSIA
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMCONSUL ADANA
AMCONSUL ISTANBUL
AMCONSUL IZMIR
USMISSION NATO
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 ANKARA 4158

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS:PFOR, PINT, EALR, TU
SUBJ: VIEW OF ECEVIT AND DEMIREL ON MAJOR POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC
ISSUES

REF: ANKARA 3990

1. EVEN IF THE JUNE 5 ELECTIONS SHOULD FAIL TO PRODUCE A
MAJORITY GOVERNMENT BY ONE OF THE TWO MAJOR PARTIES, IT IS
STILL QUITE POSSIBLE THAT ONE OF THE LEADERS OF THOSE TWO PARTIES
WILL LEAD THE GOVERNMENT FORMED AFTER THE ELECTION. THIS
TELEGRAM BRIEFLY DESCRIBES THE POSITIONS AND ATTITUDES OF
REPUBLICAN PEOPLE'S PARTY (RPP) CHAIRMAN BULENT ECEVIT AND
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JUSTICE PARTY (JP) CHAIRMAN SULEYMAN DEMIREL ON IMPORTANT
FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC ISSUES.

2. US-TURKISH RELATIONS

A. ECEVIT HAS A GRUDGING ADMIRATION FOR THE US,
BUT THIS IS TEMPERED BY AN APPARENT CONVICTION THAT ANY
SOCIETY SO RELIANT ON CAPITALISM IS BASICALLY FLAWED. HE
RECOGNIZES THE IMPORTANCE OF THE US RELATIONSHIP TO TURKEY,

BUT SEEMS TO FIND IT DISTATEFUL. MOREOVER, HE HAS MADE POLITICAL CAPITAL OUT OF HIS ABILITY TO "STAND UP TO THE UNITED STATES," I.E., THE RESUMPTION OF OPIUM POPPY CULTIVATION AND THE CYPRUS INTERVENTION; THEREFORE, HE MAY FIND IT MORE DIFFICULT THAN DEMIREL TO APPEAR TO BE COOPERATING WITH THE US. B. DEMIREL, IN CONTRAST WITH ECEVIT, POSSESSES AN IDEOLOGICAL AFFINITY FOR THE UNITED STATES. HOWEVER, HE FEELS TURKEY HAS BEEN UNFAIRLY TREATED BY THE US AND CAN BE EXPECTED TO BE PARTICULARLY CAUTIOUS IN FUTURE DEALINGS.

3. NATO

A. ECEVIT HAS BEEN CRITICAL OF NATO, CLAIMING THAT TURKEY HAS GIVEN MORE THAN SHE HAS RECEIVED, AND WHILE HE HAS MADE IT CLEAR THAT HE DOES NOT ADVOCATE TURKISH WITHDRAWAL FROM NATO, HE HAS ALSO MADE IT CLEAR THAT HE INTENDS TO RESTRUCTURE TURKEY'S DEFENSE SYSTEM TO MAKE IT MORE RESPONSIVE TO PURELY NATIONAL INTERESTS. WHAT ECEVIT'S RHETORIC MEANS IS NOT CERTAIN.

B. DEMIREL SEES THE INTERESTS OF TURKEY BEST SERVED BY CONTINUING CLOSE TIES WITH NATO. HIS ENTHUSIASM FOR NATO HAS BEEN SOMEWHAT DAMPENED, HOWEVER, BY THE US EMBARGO, THE INABILITY OF THE OTHER ALLIES TO FILL IN THE GAP, AND THE APPARENT ABILITY OF GREECE TO CONTINUE TO ENJOY THE BENEFITS OF NATO DESPITE ITS WITHDRAWAL FROM THE MILITARY WING.

4. AEGEAN DISPUTE

A. ECEVIT HAS CONSISTENTLY TAKEN A HARD LINE POSITION ON "ASSERTION OF TURKISH RIGHTS IN THE AEGEAN". BY ACCUSING THE DEMIREL GOVERNMENT OF BEING "SOFT" ON THE AEGEAN HE HAS

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GREATLY LIMITED GOT FLEXIBILITY.

B. DEMIREL, AS LEADER OF A GOVERNMENT THAT DID NOT INCLUDE THE NATIONAL SALVATION PARTY, WOULD PROBABLY BE IN BETTER POSITION TO SEEK A SETTLEMENT THAN HE IS NOW. THERE IS NO INDICATION, HOWEVER, THAT HE WOULD REVERSE THE TREND OF RECENT YEARS TOWARD INCREASING TURKISH ATTENTION TO ITS ROLE IN THE AEGEAN.

5. CYPRUS-- POPULAR OPINION HOLDS THAT ECEVIT, AS THE "HERO OF CYPRUS", COULD MAKE THE NECESSARY CONCESSIONS ON CYPRUS MORE EASILY THAN DEMIREL. THIS PROBABLY TRUE, BUT ANY STRONG GOVERNMENT WOULD PROBABLY HAVE THE CAPACITY TO WORK OUT A COMPROMISE AGREEMENT. HOWEVER, IT IS UNLIKELY THAT ANY TURKISH GOVERNMENT WILL RUSH TO SETTLEMENT.

6. DOMESTIC POLITICS AND IDEOLOGY

A. ECEVIT IS BASICALLY A CIVIL LIBERTARIAN, A FORMER JOURNALIST WHO IS PARTICULARLY SENSITIVE TO ANY LIMITATION OF THE RIGHT TO FREE EXPRESSION. HE BELIEVES THE PROBLEM OF

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IS A LOGICAL RESULT OF AN INEQUITABLE SOCIETY AND CAN BE RESOLVED ONLY BY CHANGING THE SOCIETY. HE IS ALSO THE HEIR TO THE ELITIST TRADITIONS OF ATATURK'S PEOPLES PARTY, HOWEVER, AND HE AND HIS PARTY CAN BE BOTH SELF-RIGHTEOUS AND PATRONIZING OF "THE PEOPLE". HIS ABILITY TO INFLUENCE THE FRINGE OF THE EXTREME LEFT, WHICH IS THE SOURCE OF MUCH DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, IS PROBABLY UQITE LIMITED.

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B. DEMIREL IS A TRADITIONAL CONSERVATIVE WHO TENDS TO SEE THE HAND OF THE "COMMUNISTS" BEHIND MANY OF TURKEY'S PROBLEMS. THIS IS PARTICULARLY TURE WITH RESPECT TO THE PROBLEM OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, AND PROBABLY EXPLAINS WHY HE TOLERATES THE CONTINUED EXISTENCE OF A VIOLENCE-PRONE COUNTER FORCE ON THE EXTEME RIGHT(I.E., THE "COMMANDOES" ASSOCIATED WITH THE NATIONALIST ACTION PARTY). HE ALSO BELIEVES THAT THE SUCCESSFUL CONFRONTATION OF THE LEFTIST THREAT MAY REQUIRE SOME ABRIDGEMENT OF CERTAIN CIVIL RIGHTS SUCH AS RESTRICTIONS ON "COMMUNIST" PROGAGANDA AND

PUBLIC ASSEMBLIES.

7. ECONOMICS--BOTH ECEVIT AND DEMIREL ARE COMMITTED TO
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AN EXPANSIONIST ECONOMY FED BY DEFICIT FINANCING. THERE HAS BEEN AN ATTEMPT BY PRO-ECEVIT ELEMENTS DURING THE LAST FEW WEEKS TO MAKE TURKEY'S PRESENT ECONOMIC PLIGHT A POLITICAL ISSUE. IT HAS NOT SUCCEEDED. PUBLIC DISCUSSION OF THE SITUATION THAT HAS OCCURRED HAS GENERALLY BEEN ACCUSATORY RATHER THAN CONSTRUCTIVE. NEVERTHELESS, BOTH ECEVIT AND DEMIREL PROBABLY HAVE SOME IDEA OF THE SEVERITY OF THE PROBLEM AND THE DRASTIC MEASURES THAT MAY BECOME NECESSARY AFTER THE ELECTIONS. NEITHER WILL IMPLEMENT THE NECESSARY STRINGENT MEASURES HAPPILY, BUT BOTH APPEAR TO HAVE SELECTED THEIR SCAPEGOATS SHOULD THEY BE FORCED TO DO SO--ECEVIT WILL BLAME DEMIREL; DEMIREL WILL BLAME ERBAKAN.

8. ON THE INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC FRONT, ALSO, THERE IS LITTLE BASIS FOR DIFFERENTIATING BETWEEN THE POSITIONS OF ECEVIT AND DEMIREL. BOTH ARE ALIKE IN FAVORING TURKISH ASSOCIATION WITH AND EVENTUAL MEMBERSHIP IN THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES; BOTH CAN BE EXPECTED TO TRY TO IMPROVE THE TERMS OF TURKEY'S ASSOCIATION AGREEMENT WITH THE EC. FROM THEIR SCANTY STATEMENTS ON THE SUBJECT, WE WOULD TEND TO THINK THAT ECEVIT MIGHT BE SOMEWHAT LESS INCLINED TO ENCOURAGE THE ENTRY OF FOREIGN INVESTMENT AS A SOURCE OF CAPITAL THAN DEMIREL. ECEVIT CAN BE EXPECTED TO DRAW INSPIRATION FROM SWEDEN AND YUGOSLAVIA FOR ESTABLISHMENT OF A "PEOPLE'S SECTOR" IN THE ECONOMY, BY WHICH HE APPARENTLY MEANS TO THIRD SECTOR, DISTINCT FROM PUBLIC AND PRIVATE, WHERE WORKERS OWN THE MEANS OF PRODUCTION. DEMIREL, ON THE OTHER HAND, CAN BE EXPECTED TO CONTINUE PRESENT MIXTURE OF ETATISM AND PRIVATE ENTERPRISE. THERE IS NOT INDICATION THAT EITHER CANDIDATE WOULD REDUCE TURKEY'S INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION WITHIN OECD, GATT, IMF/IBRD FRAMEWORK.
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